



They enter our homes without permission, annoy us with their unwelcome presence and disturb our peace with their buzzing sounds. They stain clothes and other materials with their dirty feet and germ-laden excreta. They search out the dinner table, the kitchen and all other rooms they can get into. Finally, they can deposit germs that cause several diseases. *They are flies.*

Of the approximately 80,000 known species of true flies, seven claim San Bernardino County as their home. Among the seven, the two that are most abundant and cause the most problems are the housefly (*Musca domestica*) and the lesser housefly (*Fannia canicularis*). Flies are considered a threat to man because they possess habits and characteristics that make them especially suitable for the transmission of diseases: hairy legs and abdomen, sponging mouth part (*labelum*) and feeding on filth. Lesser houseflies are most abundant during winter and spring and houseflies are most abundant during summer and early fall. They are attracted to foul odors, and live and feed on garbage, sewage, manure, piles of grass clippings, pet droppings, animal wastes and other decaying organic matter.

Flies ingest their food by first liquefying it with regurgitated saliva, then swallowing it with the aid of their mouth parts. With their hairy, dirty feet, legs and sponging mouth parts, they can pick up and deposit disease-carrying organisms to uncovered food, an open sore or cut, drinking water or cooking utensils. The lesser housefly seldom lands on human food and is less apt to contaminate food than the true housefly.

All developmental stages which flies undergo occur in moist environments.

Garbage is their habitat. Therefore, to prevent and control flies, sanitation must assume a top priority. Poor sanitation is responsible for most fly outbreaks, and pesticides will not control flies as long as breeding places are made available to them.

Residents who live in rural or agricultural areas can expect higher concentrations of flies. Fly prevention and control is both a personal and community responsibility.

You can help:

- ✓ Collect and dispose of garbage weekly.
- ✓ Wash out garbage bins after emptying them and cover tightly with lids at all time.
- ✓ Dispose of animal wastes and pet droppings safely on a daily basis and clean up the spot.
- ✓ Install tight-fitting screens on doors and windows.
- ✓ Remove or spread and dry grass clippings or add clippings to compost piles.
- ✓ Dry mix compost with suitable materials such as leaves, dirt or previously dried compost.
- ✓ Use selective pesticides, attractant traps, biological agents and baits to control flies.
- ✓ Report any fly complaints to San Bernardino County Vector Control at 1-800-442-2283.

## HOUSEFLY



The common housefly (*Musca domestica*) is a nuisance as well as being a potential carrier of diseases to man and domestic animals.

In two weeks, one fly may lay more than 1,000 eggs in animal excrement, garbage, kitchen refuse, piled lawn clippings and other decomposing plant and animal matter. In warm weather, the life cycle (egg to adult) usually takes 8 days. Warm or protected environments may permit fly reproduction year-round.

In cities, larval (maggot) sources of houseflies can usually be found within the distance of a city block, although the flies may sometimes travel several miles.

Besides the grayish-black housefly, several other kinds of flies are found in the home. Control of these is the same as for the housefly, although control of their maggots varies.

The male lesser housefly (*Fannia canicularis*) characteristically flies to and fro in the middle of the room, garage or shady areas. The female rests on wall surfaces in shady areas. Seldom landing on human food, they are less apt to contaminate food than the true housefly. Maggots develop from eggs laid in well-decayed vegetable matter or in animal excrement. The life cycle requires about 24 days.



## STABLE FLY

The stable fly (*Stomoxys calcitrans*) resembles the housefly, but has a slender, pointed beak with which it pierces skin and sucks blood. It is normally an outdoor fly, feeding on domesticated animals, but may enter houses in rainy weather.

To control stable fly maggots, each week dispose of stable manure, urine-soaked straw, moist, spilled feed and moist, decaying vegetation, like lawn clippings.

## BLOW FLY



The blow fly is larger than the common housefly. Several species are characterized by shiny, metallic colors: black, *Phormia*; blue, *Calliphora*; and green or copper, *Phaenicia*. They make a loud droning buzz and will lay eggs on exposed meat "flyblown flesh." The larva development of the green or copper blow fly, most commonly found in garbage wastes and pet droppings, is completed in less than a week while that of the black or blue blow fly requires 10 to 15 days.

## USE OF PESTICIDES

*If using pesticides, choose a type specifically recommended for flies. Carefully follow the manufacturer's directions. Use only for the intended purpose.*

## SPACE SPRAYS

May contain pyrethrins or synthetics such as allethrin or permethrin with synergists. Use inside or in patio/porch areas.

## SURFACE SPRAYS

Residual sprays are longer lasting but are more hazardous. They are labeled for outdoor use only.

## FLY TRAPS

Nonpoisonous attractant traps may be purchased at feed stores or garden supply retailers. These traps should be used at least 25 feet away from your residence.

For more information, contact:



County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health  
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES  
**VECTOR CONTROL PROGRAM**

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